

REMARKS

In an Office Action dated October 06, 2004, the Examiner rejects all pending claims on prior art grounds. Specifically, claims 1-14 are variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) with regard to at least one of U.S. Patent Nos. 5147515, 5616229, 5071527; 4923574, 5605615, 5141602, 5705230, and 4468293 to Hanagata, Samsonov, Kauffman, Cohen, Goolsby, Chen, Mantanabe, and Polan, respectively.

Also in the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claims 5, 7, and 8 would be allowable if amended to include all of the limitations of the base claim 1.

In response to the outstanding Action, Applicant submits the present Reply including Amendment and Remarks. Herein, Applicant amends claim 1 to include all of the limitations of allowable claim 7. Claim 7 is correspondingly canceled. Accordingly, claim 1 is now allowable to Applicant; the outstanding prior art rejections concerning claim 1, and concerning claims 2-6 and 9-14 depending therefrom, are thus rendered moot.

Claim 15 is herein newly added and includes all of the provisions of previous claims 1 and 5. As mentioned, in the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claim 5 is allowable if amended to include all of the limitations of base claim 1. Accordingly, this new claim 15 is allowable to Applicant as including all of the provisions of claims 1 and 5. Claim 16 is newly added as depending from claim 15. Claim 16 includes all of the limitations of present claim 10 and is allowable as depending upon allowable claim 15. Consideration and allowance of new claims 15 and 16 is respectfully requested.

Claim 17 is herein newly added and includes all of the provisions of previous claims 1 and 8. Claim 8 is herein correspondingly canceled. As mentioned, in the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claim 8 is allowable if amended to include all of the limitations of base claim 1. Accordingly, this new claim 17 is allowable to Applicant as including all of the provisions of both claims 1 and 8. Claim 18 is newly

added as depending from claim 17. Claim 18 includes all of the limitations of present claim 10 and is allowable as depending upon allowable claim 17. Consideration and allowance of new claims 17 and 18 is respectfully requested.

No new matter is added by way of the present Amendment as antecedent support is found throughout the originally filed specification, claims, and drawings. No new issues are presented for consideration; Applicant herein merely complies with the Examiner's requirements as set forth in the outstanding Office Action.

As set forth herein, claims 1-18 are allowable to Applicant and, accordingly, the application is now in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of all outstanding rejections and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

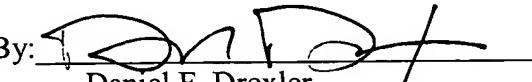
The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's attorneys at the below-indicated telephone number regarding this Reply or otherwise concerning the present application.

Applicant hereby petitions for any necessary extension of time required for consideration and entry of the present Reply.

Please charge any required fees for this Reply, or otherwise concerning the present application, to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Applicant's attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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